DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 394 614 JC 960 353

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TITLE Institutional Advancement: Using the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria for Self-Study and Accreditation.
PUB DATE 27 May 96
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development Conference on Teaching and Leadership Excellence (Austin, TX, May 26-29, 1996).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Planning; Community Colleges; Educational Finance; Educational Improvement; *Educational Quality; *Evaluation Criteria; Institutional Advancement; Institutional Evaluation; Organizational Objectives; *Program Implementation; Self Evaluation (Groups); Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS *Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award

ABSTRACT

The criteria used for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award can provide community colleges with a strategic tool for college planning, management, assessment, and accreditation. The Criteria focus on two measurable objectives for institutional effectiveness: the delivery of educational value to current and future students through instruction and support services that contribute to students' overall development and the improvement of overall college effectiveness, use of resources, and capabilities for sustainable performance. In addition, the Criteria are non-prescriptive, encouraging colleges to develop creative approaches; are comprehensive, representing a unifying framework emphasizing interdependence; emphasize the alignment of efforts throughout the college; and encourage planned change and continual improvement. Baldrige-based schools demonstrate excellence in leadership, information and analysis, strategic and operational planning, human resource development and management, educational and business process management, college performance results, and student focus and student stakeholder satisfaction. The following steps are suggested for initiating a Baldrige-based approach to institutional advancement: (1) organize an orientation for the college President's Cabinet or senior management team; (2) form and train an institutional Baldrige team; (3) establish linkages between institutional strategic planning and Baldrige-based initiatives; (4) identify the needs of current and future students and stakeholders; (5) assess current institutional strengths and weaknesses; and (6) review findings with the President's Cabinet and the senior management team. (TGI)

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ED 394 614

Institutional Advancement: Using the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria for Self-Study and Accreditation

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Paper presented at the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development Conference on Teaching and Leadership Excellence (Austin, TX, May 26-29, 1996)

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Institutional Advancement: Using the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria for Self-Study and Accreditation

International Conference on Teaching and Leadership Excellence
University of Texas at Austin, 27 May 1996

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Abstract: In their ongoing efforts to assure and improve institutional effectiveness, community college leaders are exploring ways to use the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria for college planning, management, assessment, and accreditation. Some college leaders are adopting the Baldrige Criteria as a strategic tool to organize, align and direct the institution's financial and human resources toward increased student achievement and stakeholder satisfaction. College leaders also are using the Baldrige Criteria to complement regional accreditation criteria as their institutions proceed with self-study and preparation for accreditation visits. This mini-workshop introduces community college leaders and program directors to practical ways that the Baldrige criteria may be used to plan, organize, manage, assess, and improve institutional effectiveness. The session suggests initial steps for implementation of a Baldrige-based approach to continuous systemic improvement of the community college.

Introduction: While it is clear that our community colleges are excelling in their dual mission to enable students to succeed and to serve local community needs, it also is clear that students and communities have never expected as much from community colleges as they do today. In addition to their longstanding responsibility for developing students' knowledge and skills, today's community colleges are challenged both by the complexity, diversity and violence of contemporary communities and by the urgent demands of employers for skilled, self-directed, technologically literate employees. To compound administrative challenges further, funds for continued expansion of instruction and student services are often politically and economically vulnerable in many communities where social and economic needs far outweigh available resources. In this context, community college leaders are seeking ways to assure effective day-to-day college administration as well as long-term planning and leadership for institutional advancement. The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria offer college leaders a proven administrative approach to assure and improve institutional effectiveness with emphasis on two measurable objectives:

- delivery of educational value to current and future students through instruction and support services that contribute to their overall development and well-being; and
- improvement of overall college effectiveness, use of resources and capabilities for sustainable exemplary institutional performance.

Results: The Baldrige Criteria describe a powerful, systems-based approach to organizational development and world-class performance results. This approach has been used by American industry since its inception in 1987 and more recently by colleges, schools, non-profits and government agencies to organize, manage and deliver ever-increasing improvements in organizational outcomes. Colleges and schools that have adopted the Baldrige Criteria are demonstrating significant and sustained improvement in five key areas of institutional performance: 1) student achievement; 2) student success and satisfaction; 3) stakeholder satisfaction; 4) effective and efficient use of resources; and 5) educational performance results that compare favorably to other institutions.

Systems Thinking and Institutional Alignment: Although most communities are more clear and demanding than ever about their expectations for community college performance, it remains less clear how a community college might administer itself most effectively to achieve these rigorous and urgent performance expectations. The Baldrige Criteria describe an effective administrative system to increase a college's capabilities for achieving community-based performance objectives. The Baldrige system for performance results is based on five core precepts:

1. The Criteria are non-prescriptive. The Criteria focus on results, not on procedures, tools or organization. Colleges are encouraged to develop and demonstrate creative, adaptive and flexible approaches to meeting basic requirements.

2. The Criteria are comprehensive. The Criteria represent a unifying framework that emphasizes relationships and interdependence among all programs, processes and college units.

3. The Criteria emphasize alignment. The Criteria address improvement throughout the entire college. Such alignment ensures consistency, responsiveness, decentralized decisionmaking and effective use of resources.

4. The Criteria encourage planned change and continual improvement. The Criteria call for a systemic approach to continual improvement and college performance results. This four-step approach emphasizes planning, implementation of plans, assessment of progress, and revision of plans based upon assessment findings.

5. The Criteria are part of a self-assessment system. The Criteria and associated scoring guidelines are a valuable self-assessment tool that profiles the college's strengths and opportunities for improvement. Baldrige-based colleges use this profile to plan and implement continual improvements.

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Challenges for Institutional Advancement: The three characteristics described below are common to many community colleges as they assess institutional strengths and opportunities for improvement and plan for institutional advancement. The Baldrige Criteria help colleges recognize and address these biases with constructive and positive results.

1. Internal Focus: Colleges tend to have an internal administrative and instructional focus that sometimes distances the institution from student and community needs and expectations. The adverse result of internal focus is slow or non-existent responsiveness to student and community needs. The college also may overlook opportunities for new programs and services associated with new developments in their service area. The Baldrige Criteria requires colleges to maintain an external focus that emphasizes current knowledge of student, stakeholder and community needs and expectations.

2. Program Focus: Typically, college instruction and services have been designed and supervised as independent units. At worst, programmatic focus tends to result either in redundancy of programs or in gaps in instruction and/or student services. The Baldrige Criteria requires colleges to identify and integrate programs throughout the institution with specific emphasis on cross-functional alignment, communication and cooperation.

3. Summative Assessment: Colleges typically favor outcomes assessment to determine student achievement and institutional effectiveness. Exclusive dependence on summative assessment, however, tends to delay or eliminate in-process assessment of student achievement or service quality. Without in-process indicators of student success or service quality, colleges are ill-equipped to maintain daily program effectiveness or deliver effective individualized instruction for students. The Baldrige Criteria require colleges to develop formative measures or indicators of institutional success. These formative measures help colleges understand and manage instruction and service quality in ways that immediately impact teaching, learning and student and community services

An Introduction to the Baldrige Criteria: Baldrige-based schools demonstrate excellence in each of the following seven Baldrige categories.

1.0 LEADERSHIP

College leaders create and sustain a student focus, clear goals, high expectations, and a leadership system that promotes performance excellence.

2.0 INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

The college uses data and information to support overall performance excellence.

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3.0 STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL PLANNING

The college sets strategic directions, determines key focus areas, and develops a management system to achieve planned results.

4.0 HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

The college develops its faculty and staff and maintains a climate conducive to excellence, full participation, and continual growth.

5.0 EDUCATIONAL AND BUSINESS PROCESS MANAGEMENT

The college designs, manages and improves its processes for learning-focused education, school services and business operations.

6.0 COLLEGE PERFORMANCE RESULTS

The college demonstrates positive performance results that indicate ever-increasing improvement in student achievement.

7.0 STUDENT FOCUS & STUDENT AND STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION

The college understands and is responsive to student and stakeholder needs and expectations.

The Baldrige-based Approach to Continuous Improvement: In addition to demonstrating excellence within each category, Baldrige-based colleges utilize the Criteria framework in Figure A to identify, design and coordinate key linkages among all seven Baldrige categories. These connections help colleges direct and align continual improvement efforts toward specific performance goals and objectives. The framework has four basic elements:

- Goal: Student Success and Stakeholder Satisfaction -- The basic aim of the framework is the delivery of ever-improving instruction and educational services.

- Driver: Leadership -- To achieve the goal, senior leadership sets directions, creates shared values, goals, and systems, and guides pursuit of student and college performance improvement.

- System: Planning, Staff Development, Management, Assessment -- The educational system necessary to achieve the college's goals is made up of four components: strategic planning, faculty and staff development, design and administration of education and business processes, and data collection and analysis.

- Measures of Progress: Student Outcomes, College Effectiveness -- Measures of progress provide a results-oriented basis for directing college activities toward ever-improving student and college performance and effective use of school resources.

Linkages between Accreditation Criteria and Baldrige Criteria: Accreditation criteria tend to focus on institutional inputs and outputs with comparatively limited attention to the effectiveness of day-to-day administrative, instructional and student service methods and processes. Hence, accreditation criteria may validate quality in design and quality in performance while offering little insight into quality of ongoing administrative, instructional and student service processes. The Baldrige Criteria complement accreditation criteria by requiring integration of planning, implementation of plans and achievement of performance outcomes. The Criteria refer to these administrative steps as Approach, Deployment and Results:

- Approach: The effective college develops appropriate plans and methods to achieve desired results;
- Deployment: The effective college implements and continuously improves its methods to achieve desired results;
- Results: The college's performance results vary in proportion to the effectiveness of its administrative, instructional and students service methods and its day-to-day implementation of planned actions.

While accreditation criteria require college accountability for effective institutional organization, planning and performance outcomes, the Baldrige Criteria require complementary excellence in day-to-day deployment and continuous improvement of college operations, instruction and services. When used together, accreditation criteria and the Baldrige Criteria offer colleges a dynamic, results-oriented framework for institutional advancement through ongoing daily administration of effective teaching, learning, research, student services and community services.

Getting Started: The following steps are suggested for initiating a Baldrige-based approach to institutional advancement:

1. Orientation for President's Cabinet or Senior Management Team: This session introduces senior leaders to the Baldrige Criteria and encourages dialogue and exploration of possible institutional applications. Decide to pursue and support a Baldrige-based approach to institutional advancement.

2. Initiate and Educate an Institutional Baldrige Team: Form a representative, cross-functional team of college leaders to direct and conduct a Baldrige-based assessment. Provide appropriate professional development for this team to assure knowledge of the Criteria and appropriate methodology for self-study.

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3. Key Linkages to Institutional Strategic Planning: Establish administrative cooperation and coordination of institutional strategic planning and Baldrige-based initiatives. Be certain to clarify and establish complementary responsibilities and expectations for all participants involved.

4. Define Current and Future Student and Stakeholder Requirements: This is an essential preliminary step toward sustainable high-performance college results. Conduct focus groups, initiate surveys, review enrollment data and trends to validate current institutional directions and direct design and development of new college programs and services.

5. Conduct Baseline Baldrige Self-Assessment: Collect information on current institutional strengths and opportunities for improvement and write initial Baldrige-based self-study report.

6. Debrief and Planning Session for President's Cabinet or Senior Management Team: Review learnings from self-study report and identify next steps for implementing continuous improvement in the college.

Suggested References:

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Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria, call (301) 975-2036

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Brian Cooke is executive director of the Institute for Excellence, an education and management consulting firm that assists organizations with improving planning, productivity, performance, customer satisfaction and quality of work life. Prior to founding the Institute, Brian served as director of Quality Programs at Santa Fe Community College (NM). Brian designed and teaches courses as a part-time instructor in quality operations at the University of New Mexico and Albuquerque Technical-Vocational Institute. Brian's clients in higher education include: Albuquerque Technical-Vocational Institute, Eastern New Mexico University - Roswell, El Paso Community College, Johns Hopkins University, New Mexico State University - Alamogordo, New Mexico Highlands University, Santa Fe Community College, and the University of New Mexico Anderson Schools of Management. Institute for Excellence clients have won eight New Mexico Quality Awards based on the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria. In addition to numerous articles and conference presentations, Brian is author of *Frank Boyden of Deerfield: The Vision and Politics of an Educational Idealist*. (New York; Madison Books, 1994.)

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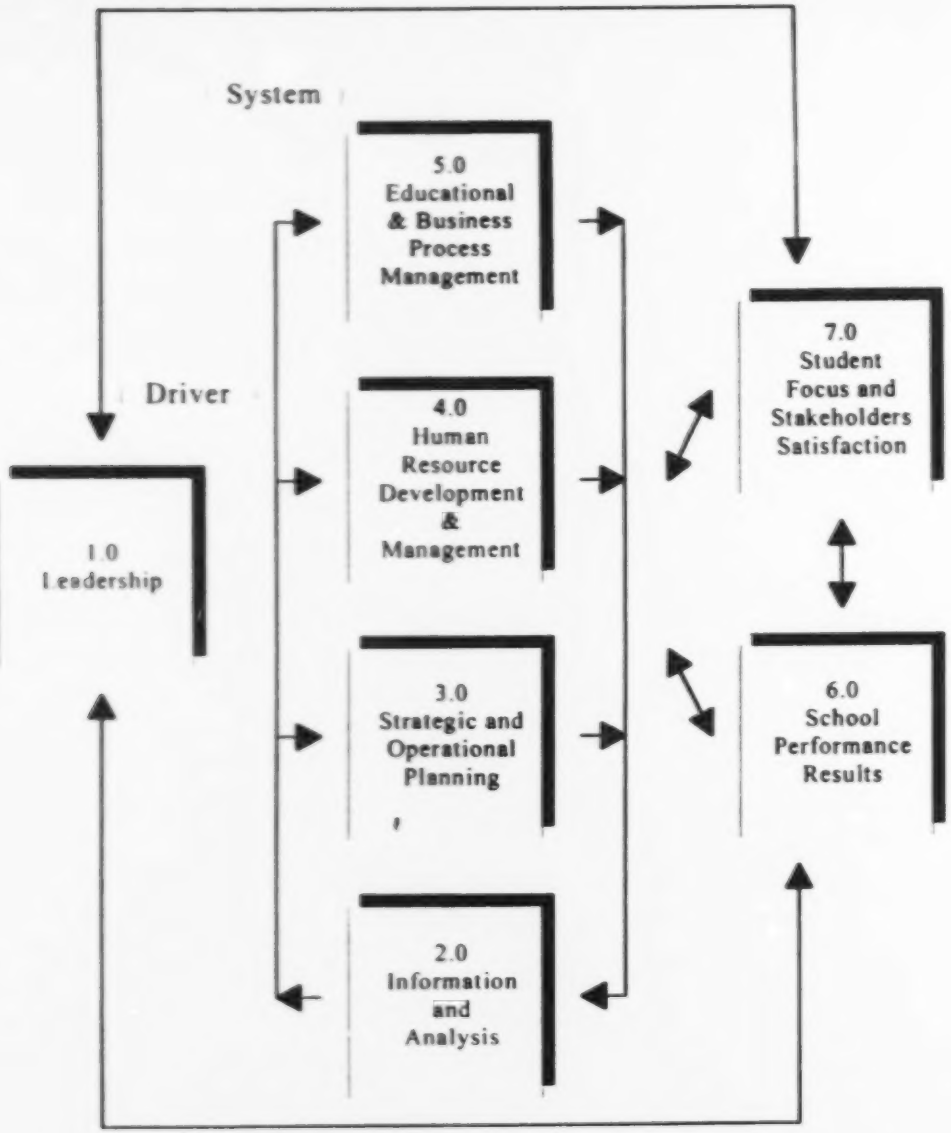

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Goal

Student Success/Satisfaction
Stakeholder Satisfaction
Student Retention

Measures of Progress

Student Performance
Educational Climate
Research, Scholarship, and Service
Efficient Use of Resources

Baldrige
Award
Criteria
Framework

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A Comparison of North Central Association Criteria for Accreditation and Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria

	1.0 Leadership	2.0 Information & Analysis	3.0 Strategic & Operational Planning	4.0 Human Resource Development & Management	5.0 Education & Business Process Management	6.0 College Performance Results	7.0 Student Focus & Student and Stakeholder Satisfaction
Criterion One: The institution has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education.							
Criterion Two: The institution has effectively organized the human, financial and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes.							
Criterion Three: The institution is accomplishing its educational and other purposes.							
Criterion Four: The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.							
Criterion Five: The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships.							

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